

The Washington Post A25
 The New York Times _____
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 The Wall Street Journal _____
 The Christian Science Monitor _____
 New York Daily News _____
 USA Today _____
 The Chicago Tribune _____
 Date 9 NOV 1991

CIA's Proposed Move Is No 'Scheme'

Your editorial "No to Sen. Byrd's CIA Move" [Nov. 6] described the agency's proposed consolidation plan as an ill-conceived "scheme" that was "drawn up in closed-door negotiations between Sen. Byrd and Sen. John Warner." That is not the case, and your readers are entitled to know the facts.

The Central Intelligence Agency has proposed a plan to consolidate on two new compounds a portion of its Washington-area work force now scattered in 21 leased buildings in Northern Virginia. This is CIA's proposal, not a senatorial "scheme." As your editorial indicates, objective public debate on the agency's proposal has been hampered by a number of misconceptions and inaccuracies. Let me set the record straight.

- The proposed consolidation would enhance the productivity and security of the agency's work force, improve operational efficiency and be cost-effective in the long run. The dispersal of important agency components in 21 leased buildings is costly and a security and logistical nightmare. The consolidation plan is designed to bring components together, eliminating time-consuming inter-building travel by personnel who must interact with one another daily. The \$1.2 billion cost estimate for the project is a total program cost that includes operations and maintenance, security and communications. It also includes a calculation for inflation out to the year 2010. Our proposal assumes that CIA will have a smaller work force in the coming years, but the problems that underlie our proposal will persist and worsen if action is not begun now. It would be more expensive in the long run for the agency to do nothing.

- The proposed dual site approach is a logical solution. We have proposed a Prince William County site for certain scientific, technical and administrative personnel who need traditional office space and interact with agency headquarters regularly. We have proposed a Jefferson County, W.Va., site for certain land-intensive, light industrial activities that do not require employees to travel frequently to headquarters. The cost of land in West Virginia is about one-tenth of the cost of land in Northern Virginia.

- The agency is not being pressured to go to West Virginia. The possibility of a West Virginia location for some agency activities has been considered for a number of years. The consolidation proposal was developed by senior agency management working closely with professional consultants. We believe it makes sense, and our consultants agree. The agency has not been coerced by Sen. Byrd or anyone else.

- The planning process has not circumvented any government procedures or undermined the role of Congress. All we have done thus far is to develop a proposal and present it to the appropriate committees. As with any initiative requiring appropriated funds, the decision on how to proceed remains in the hands of Congress. Although we tried to keep all concerned parties advised during the planning process, we failed to stay in close enough touch with the House Intelligence Committee earlier this year. We regret that and have apologized for it.

- The proposed consolidation will benefit agency employees. The new compounds would not begin to be occupied until the late 1990s, so there will be no early impact on agency employees. Employees who would be affected will have ample notice, and, as in the past, the agency will try its best to identify suitable reassignments if necessary. Agency management has long been concerned about problems related to affordable housing in Northern Virginia and increasingly long commutes to the headquarters area for present and future employees. We believe the two proposed sites will allow many employees to commute against the flow of traffic and bring more affordable housing within reach.

For those old enough to recall the agency's earlier days, the current controversy is reminiscent of the concern in the 1950s about plans to move CIA headquarters to "far away" Langley. We are now, as we were then, trying our best to plan for the future with the best interests of everyone in mind.

—Richard J. Kerr

The writer is deputy director of central intelligence.

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